

NOT THE END – JUST A DIFFERENT ROAD



I've been thinking for a while of **winding back the web-site, and using the Facebook page as the main place to post day-to-day, newsy type updates, and what would normally go in my Blog etc.** At the moment all the day-to-day things are posted on the Facebook page, but most are still also posted on the website. Most, but not all.

It's a sign of the times, and the changing landscape of online activities, that things like this mostly make their home on social-media – Facebook in particular. Of course websites are still used, but more for businesses rather than for this type of blog and news, etc. Either that or they are duplicated – as is happening here. I can think of two Facebook pages I'm

on which have both a website and a Facebook page (both are blog-type pages), and I must say that I access them both on Facebook; I hardly ever go to the web-sites. And that seems to be the way most people operate these days.

Keeping both updated takes time, and it's difficult finding the time. Even though I am now retired (mostly anyway) other things seem to keep me busy! For example, I'm very involved in the classic car movement, which includes producing a monthly magazine for my local club; and that takes up a lot of time.

Looking at the statistics of the website is quite revealing. The number of hits the web-site gets is still quite high – surprisingly so! – but looking at how long people are spending on the site once they got here, it is obvious a lot of hits come from people just surfing; or clicking links that pop up in Google. These hits are coming from people who click the link, see that it's not what they were after, and click away again. Those visits actually make up a large portion of hits the web-site gets. So, the statistics show that **the real usage of the website is quite low now.** Yes, it is still being used, but the traffic is thinning out.

So I have come to the decision that **The Old Bloke will exist predominantly on Facebook.**



Most people are on Facebook these days, aren't they? Well, no, I know some people aren't part of the social media thing, and ideally it would be good to keep it going, if only for them; but it's got to the point where I can't really justify keeping both going, in terms of regular updates and blog entries etc. And it just isn't the way these sort of sites are operating these days.

There's another reason too: **the format of the website is very outdated.** For example, it's not really suitable for viewing on a mobile device, like mobile phone, iPad etc. It works okay sometimes, on some

devices, but it isn't actually set up for that. That's down to the organisation that hosts the site, and the software they provide to build and edit the site with. It *can* be made suitable for mobile devices, but that involves a secondary organisation, and / or different software. And converting everything on this website to that format would be impossible: just not feasible to do it. An option I have looked at a couple of times was to move the website to a different host and use a different editing program: but that's not possible either, because the code that the site is built on is unique to this host and can't really be transferred. (*Well, it is their program and site that we've been using.*)

But, as I said at the top, **it isn't the end! We're just changing road – from the "information super-highway" to Facebook Highway.**

Now, if you're one of those people who aren't on Facebook, and say, "I'm not going on Facebook! I don't want to spend my time scrolling through videos of cats and photos of people's lunches!" Well, you don't have to! You can join Facebook and not subscribe to people and places who post that sort of content; you don't have to post anything yourself; you can just join, subscribe to my page (and any other that you like) and you'll pretty much only see posts from those people; (with the occasional ads of course!).

But it's not the end of the website! Articles and road-tests and all those sort of major things will still be posted on the website. You'll get a notification and link come up on Facebook to tell you it's there and take you to it: or bring up the article directly, as it will have done with this. Because of the format issues, over the past few years I've been posting major articles and stories as PDF files.

You can even go to the website and check the "What's New" page, and any major articles that have been posted to the site will be listed there. But you won't get the day-to-day blog items, and newsy things. All that will be on Facebook. **There's lots of things I post on Facebook now that don't get to the website** –like videos and photos etc, that just don't get to the website. **These days, social media is where this sort of content is.**

However the web-site will still exist and be of service as a stand-alone entity, but not one that is regularly updated with bits of newsy type entries.

I will try to post more articles and tests etc on the website, because I know that these things are appreciated. Just recently I received an email from a regular reader who wrote, "*Thank you for the splendid content that you've been putting out for all these years. A voice of reason in a sea of posers.*" **I really appreciate comments like that,** because they highlight the reason I started this website: to be a voice for the older generation of riders, and a voice of an everyday rider, not a boy-racer, or someone pandering to the company that loaned them the bike. **Hopefully you will join us on Facebook and get the information and links from there.**

Go to Facebook and search for "The Old Bloke". Or click this link to take you there. <https://www.facebook.com/theoldblokemotorcycling>

Okay, let's take a look back over the 16 years I've been running the website; what inspired it, the highlights and lowlights etc.

HOW IT BEGAN

"We're old farts!" He said. *"We don't think we are, but to the younger riders that's what we are; we're old farts!"* I was in the process of buying a bike off a private seller. The seller was around about the same age as me, and we were talking about riding, and attitudes, and younger riders. He was right, of course. I'd never really considered it before, but he was right: **to younger riders I was an old bloke!** I didn't feel old, but to a lot of other (younger) bikers that's what I was. This realisation was reinforced by the fact that I was just a few months off turning 50. I didn't consider that "old" as such, but I realised that, to a fair portion of motorcycling fraternity, that's what I was. That was **late 1999.**

Fast-forward 4 years, and I was upgrading to a later model bike (bought from a young guy who was returning to UK). That bike, a **1996 Yamaha XJ600,** was, for me at that stage, just about the perfect bike. It was good to ride and I progressively rode more often, and further. As a consequence, over the next year or so my interest in bikes – which had always been there to some extent but grew stronger when I bought my first bike, at age 26 – deepened and became a more active interest. I was reading more bike magazines, and I came to realise that **most of the bike journos were younger blokes, and wrote from a younger person's perspective.** I thought back to those words the previous seller had said, and it occurred to me that no-one was writing from an older rider's perspective: **the "old farts" of the motorcycling world didn't have a voice!**

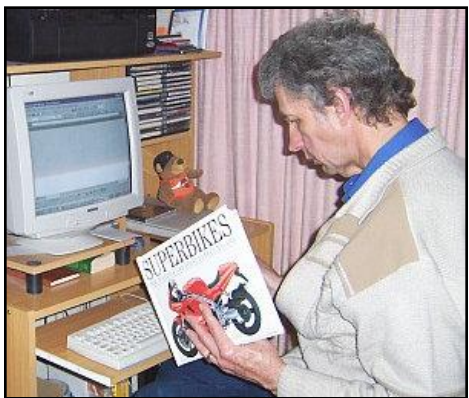
Sure, there were older bike journalists around – the most prominent probably being Peter "The Bear" Thoeming. John Rooth and Grant Roff were another two. But even they didn't write from an old bloke's perspective. There was never mention of bad backs or crook knees: the tests could just as well have been written by a 30-year-old. So there was, as I saw it, a gap in the motorcycling press; and I

thought I could fill that gap. **Thus the inspiration for The Old Bloke website was brought to fruition.**

Another thing that inspired me to publish my writings about bikes was the observation that **many road-tests seemed to heavily pander to the manufacturer who had given them the bike to test.** It's a common scenario. The tester thinks, "If I criticise the bike too much, the manufacturer won't give me any more bikes to test; and if I don't have bikes to test I don't have anything to write about." I won't say it was a total gap in the motorcycling press (because there *were* some honest journos around) but there was, as I saw it, **a need for more honest opinions to be expressed.** And so **The Old Bloke website was born.** That was **early 2005.**

Right from the beginning I emphasised the fact that **I was not setting myself up as some all-knowing motorcycling guru.** As I said at the time, "I have friends who have been riding for longer than me and who I would consider more knowledgeable than I am. But you don't get to my age without gaining some degree of knowledge and experience." And I reckoned **there was a need for the views of a "more mature" rider in the world of motorcycling journalism!** As I said back then, "So much of what we read in magazines and on-line seems to be written by young athletic riders who spend most of their time blasting around a race-track! Where are the comments from some old bloke with a crook back? Where are the comments from someone who places as much importance on ride and comfort as on lap-times around a racing circuit? Well, now they're here! That's why I set up this site!"

HOW IT GREW



My observation that there was a need in the world of motorcycling journalism for a voice expressing opinions from an older rider's perspective was soon proved right: **the website caught the attention of older riders and the readership grew quite rapidly.** It even spread overseas, and before too long I had regular readers from America and UK, and other places around the world. For quite a long time, if you typed "The Old Bloke" into Google, the top answer it came up with was my website. It's still not far from the top.

Regular tests of bikes were appreciated; and publishing a Blog – which was both personal stories of what I'd been up to, and newsy items that caught my attention – kept readers interested; as did the facility for them to write in and share their thoughts with me. Articles on various topics, from safety to technical issues, to recommended places to eat, were all other things to attract attention. Readers sharing stories of their bikes, and telling of their riding adventures, were more features that kept readers coming back. Readers could also write in with questions, which I would try to answer but also publish so that other readers could write in to help them out.

LURKS AND PERKS – WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

I am not a qualified journalist. I've done a lot of writing over the years, and occasionally had my writings published in various magazines, but I'm not a qualified journalist and I have never been an official member of the press. So my test-bikes have not been sourced directly from manufacturer's test fleets. That has sometimes limited what bikes I've been able to test, but in a way it is a good thing – because **I have no reason to feel any obligation to a manufacturer.** Thus **I can write without fear or favour, telling it exactly as it is, in terms of what I think of each bike I test.** This honesty of opinion has been one of the main things that has brought people to the website; and kept them coming back to read the latest tests. So the bikes I have tested have almost exclusively come from dealers. Some were group test-rides, others were extended solo tests. I didn't get a new bike to test every couple of weeks, as the journos do, but there are still a lot of bikes on the website that I have tested.

At the time of writing (beginning of 2021) **there are about 90 new bikes that I've tested** (they aren't new now, but were when I tested them), plus a myriad of older models I've ridden over the years. So there are lots of bikes to check out my reports on, if you are in the market for a new, or 2nd-hand, bike.

Some bikes got a lot of praise, others got a real panning – again, I just told it as I found it! That attracted some criticism at times – mostly from Harley owners when I criticised a Harley. There was some justification perhaps for this: I commented on the bike as a bike, and didn't take into account the whole lifestyle / culture aspect. That is very much a part of owning a Harley; although it doesn't make what the bike actually does any better. I was also criticised for mostly riding Sportsers, and not the big bikes: they would give me a different experience of HD some said. The reason I didn't test those was because I'm a weak old bloke and those things are heavy! (Even though Harleys always feel lighter than they are). I was afraid of dropping them, and having to come up with thousands of dollars for repairs; so I left those alone.

Power was never a deterrent with bikes I rode; and to some extent I can't understand how people find it so. I have ridden some very powerful bikes, and never had a problem. You just go easy with the right hand – *it isn't difficult!* Sure, the test then is no reflection of the bike's ability, but no test would be, without taking it on a racetrack.

I've also sought out products to test from time to time. These have included luggage, such as a tank bag; bike protection, like Oggy Knobs; and clothing, like gloves and jeans. **These things are some of the perks of motorcycle journalism: you get stuff for free to test.** I was a bit careful with this though: I didn't want to get a product for free and then bag it out in my test; so I mostly only tested products that I thought would earn a favourable report. Put another way, if I already thought a product wasn't a good product, then I wasn't too interested in having it, or reporting on it. However I still called products out when I found something deserving of criticism. For example, I was one of only a couple of people who reported on a particular Ventura tank-bag to criticise the mobile phone pouch for being too small to hold most modern phones. (*Here are just some, with links underneath to my report*).



[Qwi Gloves](#)



[Gryp Puncture Repair Kit](#)



[Oggy Knobs](#)

I tried to be very thorough with these reports, for the benefit of those reading them: but writing a thorough report was also appreciated by the companies that gave me the product to report on. A good example was my report on [Oggy Knobs](#). Not only did I describe the product, I also described (with photos to illustrate, one of which is shown above), how they were fitted. The distributor who gave them to me wrote to say **I had set a new standard in product reporting**; only bettered by Cycle Torque magazine, who published a video on their YouTube channel. I was quite proud of that one. But **I was very thorough with all product reports.**

AH, THE MEMORIES!

Over a period of more than 15 years of testing bikes **there have been many memories!** Way too many to relate here. So **I'll recount just a select few.** (*With links to the test / story*).

Okay, let's get this one out of the way first. **I have only ever dropped a test-bike once: and that was in the forecourt of the dealer's shop!** It was the [Aprilia Shiver 750](#). No problem on the road, but when I got back to the dealer, I turned left and then began a tight circular turn to park it facing the

driveway, as it was when I picked it up. I leaned in, turned the bars, and ran out of steering lock. Too much leaning and not enough turning meant the whole show came crashing down on its side – with me partly under it. I jarred my hand pretty badly, and my knee and hip were a bit sore afterwards, but no bruises. And of course having all the gear on meant there were no scrapes to the skin. The bike sustained some very small scratches to the end of the handlebar, and the gear lever was bent in against the motor. The Aprilia guy looked at the bike closely but said it was only very minor marks so wouldn't worry about it. (I could've been liable for the damage – up to the usual excess of \$2,000).



The first bike I rode and wrote a story on was actually a couple of years before I began the website. I went to a Harley open-day at the local dealer. I'd never ridden a Harley, so that was the attraction of joining the test-group. I rode a [Harley Davidson Sportster 883](#): not even a proper Harley by some aficionado's standards. That was in 2003. As I said at the time, "Most of us probably know someone who owns one; and heard them waxing lyrical about the magic of their Milwaukee mount. But what sort of impression do they make on the average-Joe (*or in this case, the average 'old-bloke'*) who just rocks up and throws a leg over one; just to see what they're like?" And **that was the way I approached all Harley test-rides – and all test-rides for that matter.** As I said above, I (perhaps erroneously) generally didn't

consider the lifestyle / culture aspect; I just wanted to see what it was like as a bike to ride. Not surprisingly, the little Sportster was both good and bad; but I was more impressed than I expected to be. The vibration was one of the "bad" things, but I liked the quality well-built feel and look about it all. Performance wasn't very "sports-like" but it had plenty of low-down grunt, which I like. I even said it handled well – different, but quite well.

I've ridden quite a few Harleys over the years, and didn't really like any of them. They're just not my cup-of-tea; but I *do* understand the image / lifestyle thing. And, as I said above, I should probably have taken that more into account than I did. Again as I said above, when I tested one, I formed an opinion on what the bike did, and how it did it, **as a bike; not as a Harley in particular.** Although perhaps I should have; I did a bit more in later tests.

A reader who commented on one of my tests put it very well. He wrote, "**Harleys have always been more a state of mind and tend to suffer when examined objectively against other bikes.** What people tend to forget is that Harleys were first and foremost designed for American roads, and in that they are unsurpassed." I understand!

Despite their sometimes reputation (*or is it just people bagging them out?*), they've mostly impressed me with their quality of components and build-quality. The steel is proper steel, chrome is proper chrome –not plastic like the Japanese, etc.

The two I liked most were the [XR1200](#) and the [Street 500](#). Both were out-classed by other bikes in the market they were aimed at, but they did impress me. The [V-Rod](#) was another one I kind of liked. Comfortable, a reasonably good ride, good performance, and (probably like all Harleys) it felt smaller and lighter than it was. It was awkward in corners, but otherwise it was quite impressive on the road. (Below left: the **XR1200**. Below right: the **Street 500**).



Perversely perhaps, one Harley that I did enjoy riding was the [Harley 48](#). I expected to hate it; and there were a lot of things to dislike, such as the short-travel bone-jarring rear suspension, the horrific vibration, and the silly form-over-function styling efforts. But it was kind of fun. I developed a procedure at traffic-lights where I'd stop and stand up (*to escape the "shaking like a wet-dog" vibration*) then when the lights changed I'd sit down while simultaneously kicking it into gear and immediately taking off. That was kinda cool – and somehow added to the "tough" image of the bike.

I have to say that one of the most impressive looking bikes I've ever tested was the [Harley 72](#). Painted in a glorious metal-flake bronze type colour, with lots of gleaming chrome (*real chrome, remember, not Japanese plastic!*), **it looked fabulous!**



Harley V-Rod



Harley 72

The [Suzuki Bandit 1200S](#) was the **first big bike (1000cc+)** that I'd ridden; and it was **very**



impressive! The first impression, as I rolled it out of the dealer's driveway and into Queanbeyan traffic, was of **how easy it was to ride**. Then I was impressed with the engine that gave it great performance, but was also very tractable, pulling from nothing almost to redline with no trouble. The ease with which it would breeze up to 140kph or so in very short distance was impressive; and even rush to over 160kph on just a slightly longer straight. And it handled well. **"This bike looks good, it's comfortable, and it does everything well."** I even tried simulating different situations (like riding in heavy traffic) to find the "chink in its armour", but there was none. **"It just**

retained its easy-to-ride nature no matter what you did with it!"

I've ridden a few Bandits since then, and they are a great bike. My main criticism being that with each successive model the seat got harder, and the suspension more firm.

That bike provided me with one of the **very pleasant memories of testing bikes** too – riding out from Queanbeyan towards Braidwood, loving the power and speed of the bike and the way it handled the smooth curves and undulating road. **It felt great! I didn't want to go back!**

There have been many memorable experiences. Some are what might be called "moments in time"; like **riding a 2004 Triumph Sprint ST (that I was considering buying) back into Goulburn on the Hume Highway in pouring rain** (with no wet weather gear), sitting on 110 – 120kph with water streaming back from the edges of the screen, the bike perfectly stable as it passed trucks and cars. I got wet (mainly in town), but **there was something special about riding the highway on that bike on that day.**

Some memories were not so great. Like the day I took a **2nd-hand Triumph Sprint** for a ride from a dealer in Mittagong. Before I left they told me the battery was flat – “So don’t stall it”. And what did I do? **I stalled it!** It was at an intersection on the crest of a hill. I thought I was going to have to call for assistance, but managed to get it just over the crest of the hill and then clutch-started it and rode back.

Another not-so-great memory was **getting lost in Canberra**. I went on a group test-ride from a Canberra dealer, riding a [KTM 640](#), which was a super-motard. A weird bike in many ways. I



managed to stall it too – three times in fact! Mostly at traffic lights. (*Keep it revving, even while stationary, and then give it heaps of revs to take off!*). The rest of the group were mostly on road-bikes. Apparently I missed the memo to “ride it like you stole it”, because the other guys were doing wheelies away from the traffic-lights and then tearing off down the streets like they were being chased by the police! It wasn’t too long before I lost sight of them. And I had no idea where I was – in Canberra, which if you don’t know it, is one of the most confusing cities to be lost in. I guessed which way might lead back to the dealer, and happened to catch up with the group waiting by some traffic lights. Obviously someone finally realised the old bloke on the motard wasn’t behind them.

If you look at the list of bikes I’ve tested (up to the time of writing this – January 2021), there are **8 BMWs and 12 Ducatis**. **That’s a whole lot of memories and fun right there!** Some were great, some not so great, but **what an experience to ride all these great European machines!**

There were so many good (and a couple of not-so-good) ones amongst those bikes. Two stand



out. The [BMW K1300S](#). This was the most powerful K series BMW – yes, even more powerful than the 6-cylinder K1600. In fact, until the release of the S1000R it was the most powerful bike that BMW had ever made!

This bike was a good example of what I said earlier about power not being intimidating. I had no trouble riding this bike at all: partly that was just a matter of being gentle with the throttle, but it was also due to the wonderfully flexible nature of the bike. No doubt a fast rider on a twisty road would have a great time, but the bike was also happy to toddle along at old-bloke-speed, with just a burst of go-fast when asked of it. **Great bike!**

In Ducati land the standout for me was the [S4RS Testastretta](#): “The one with the Superbike



engine” as they described it. A detuned version of the Superbike engine, of course! But there was still a heap of power to play with. **This is the only bike I’ve ever done a wheelie on during a test!** Unintentionally, I might add. A bit of throttle out of a slow turn in the suburbs suddenly saw the front wheel about 6 inches in the air. I let it stay there for a few seconds and let it drop back down. The bike was perfectly stable during it all. As I said at the time, “For a moment there I felt like I was Troy Bayliss powering out of a slow turn, rather than an

old bloke on a group test-ride!” Of course there were impracticalities, (like an oil-cooler positioned right where stones would flick up from the front wheel), but it remains, as it was then, **the most enjoyable Ducati I’ve ever ridden!**

Trail-bikes, cruisers, sports-bikes, naked, sports-tourers and more – lots of variety in the types of bikes I’ve ridden too. They were all enjoyable in their own way, and interesting to have ridden. Some suited me more than others of course, but they were all interesting to ride.

Cruisers don’t suit me. As you will know, I have a bad back, and the ergonomics of cruisers are not good for crook backs. Yes, I know that some people with bad backs have cruisers and love

them. But in general, having a harsh ride at the back from relatively short-travel suspension, and a seating position that transmits road-shocks directly up your spine, is not a good thing for crook backs.

The bike that affected me the worst was the [Triumph Speedmaster](#). But that was partly because



I rode it for longer than I should have. The riding-position was all wrong for a bloke with a crook back, and it wasn't long before I started to feel that. **But I was very impressed with the bike, and wanted to ride it further.** What impressed me was that it was a good example of the breed. One of the first thoughts I had when riding it was, "Someone should give Harley Davidson one of these, to show them that a cruiser doesn't have to have an engine that vibrates so much it blurs your vision, or a gearbox that feels like it was

taken off a tractor!" After I returned the bike to the dealer I went looking for a chemist shop to buy some anti-inflammatory cream for my badly aching back. But for what it was, it was a good bike!

Serious sports-bikes are another style that isn't going to suit an old bloke either; although luckily I have nothing wrong with my knees. But the typical bum-up, head-down riding position is still not going to suit an old bloke with a crook back. So the [Triumph Daytona](#) was never going to be my style of bike. But I was interested to ride it. Sitting on the bike I said, "You don't so much sit on it as



crouch over it. A bit like a dog eating its dinner." Comments from blokes who had already ridden it weren't encouraging, like, "My knees are bugged anyway, but by the time we got to the top of the mountain I'd had enough; I wanted to get off!" And, "It'd be fun to own, but I couldn't afford the chiropractor bills after each ride." Luckily, as I said, my knees are okay. But my back was starting to complain soon after leaving on the ride.

But I was very impressed with this bike! As I said in summarising it, "**This is not a bike for old blokes.**

But it's a brilliant bike!" The riding position was lay-down sporty as I described – and you expect that – but it

didn't result in my head protruding over the front wheel as had been the case with some Ducati Monsters for example. It still played havoc with my back, and once I'd got home I was reaching for the anti-inflammatory drugs and back medication. But the bike was brilliant! Such a tractable engine, and smooth from idle to screaming. It would readily scream too, with a redline at 14,000rpm. I didn't get it to the redline, but I did get it to 12,000rpm. That was 108kph, still in 1st gear! **It's the only bike I've ever broken the highway speed-limit on in 1st gear!** (The [Yamaha FZ1S](#) would easily do it too, but I didn't).

I haven't ridden many scooters: it's not that I didn't want to; it's just that none were available when I went to do a test-ride. Mostly anyway. But I was impressed with the at least most of the ones I did ride.



The [Yamaha T-Max](#) was impressive. Yamaha described it as being, "Part scooter, and part sports-bike". The "sports-bike" bit might have been exaggerating, but it did go well.

But the one that I remember most fondly is the [SYM HD200 EVO](#). **What a fun little thing that was!** And with decent sized wheels it was more stable and didn't react to bumps the way small-wheelers do. And being 200cc gave it a bit more poke than the 125cc version I rode on the same day. **I would very happily have one of those tucked away in the shed to blast around the suburbs on!**

Inevitably, when looking back over years of testing bikes, people will ask, "*What was your favourite?*" And

“Which one was the worst?” Having ridden so many bikes, you’d expect this to be a hard choice; and it would be if it was “Best” and “Worst”: I mean, how can you compare a 125cc scooter with a sports-bike and decide how they rank in a best-worst order? But **to say which bikes I liked best and liked least is actually easy: there are two clear stand-outs.**

The worst one would have to be the [Harley Nightster](#). (Sorry Harley fans, but this was awful!). But to give credit where it’s due, it wasn’t all bad: the engine was rubber-mounted, so the



vibration wasn’t quite as bad as some previous ones I’d ridden. The gearbox was better too. And, being the 1200 Evo engine, it went pretty well. But the rear suspension had been chopped down (“Slammed” in Harley-speak) to get the bike sitting lower. Again in the interests of style they even chopped a bit of padding out of the usually fairly comfortable seat. I had been warned. As I was looking at it prior to my ride, a guy who had previously ridden it looked at me and said, “It rides like shit!” **Before I’d even left the driveway I was beginning to wonder if there**

actually was any rear suspension at all! And I thought it looked awful as well!

The one I liked most – at the time anyway – was the [2007 Triumph Sprint ST](#). This is the only bike I have “fallen in love with” on the test!



A year later my opinion had changed: I decided that the riding-position was too lean-forward for me. When riding a previous model and a [Yamaha XJR1300](#) back to back around city streets, I found I much preferred the Yamaha to ride. I was very seriously considering buying a 2nd-hand Triumph, but back-to-back on the same route I preferred the Yamaha – which both did and didn’t surprise me. It did surprise me because a big naked muscle-bike was not what I wanted; I wanted a sports-tourer. But, having sat on one at the Sydney Motorcycle Show

and found it the most comfortable bike I tried, it perhaps wasn’t such a surprise. And, as regular readers will know, I subsequently bought a Yamaha XJR1300, and loved it! (Despite it not being my preferred style of bike).

But getting back to the Triumph, and 2007, I was in love! **I had admired the Sprint ST for a number of years, so it was off to a good start before I even sat on it.** Out of the dealer’s driveway and around town it was easy to ride. I was liking it. The test-route didn’t allow any real high-speed cruising, but I did sit it on 140kph along a patchy back-road and it was cruising easily, steady as a rock, and soaking up the bumps with amazing compliance. I took it up a narrow, rough, tightly-twisting, steep mountain road, and it handled that with great aplomb. Then on some flowing winding road after that it demonstrated good handling. I said that, “The engine is a great piece of engineering; a real gem!” Plenty of power, but very tractable, and smooth all the way. No, the bike wasn’t perfect, and I still found a couple of minor things to niggle about (I always do!), but I came back from the test reluctant to hand it back. **I wanted one! I really, really wanted one!**

AND SO TO CHANGE

Anyway, as I said in the title – **this is not the end!** So there will hopefully be more tests to come (although I don’t get to do tests as often as I used to). The website will continue, but again, as I have already explained, it won’t be posted to regularly and have a Blog etc as it has done. **That will happen on Facebook.**

Remember that my Blog (which is now just entries on Facebook, not a separate section) is a combination of personal what-I've-been-doing things and other newsy bits –just as it has been on the website. Only there is more on Facebook than gets posted to Facebook.

As I said, a lot of this has been happening for a couple of years or so anyway, but I've also been putting most if it on the website too. But now that will all be on Facebook.

It's really a sign-of-the-times: the way digital content is presented online has changed. These days social media is king; at least in a lot of things. And especially with something like this, and particularly with it having taken on more of a Blog type form, rather than a product-testing form in recent times, **social media is its more natural home.**

So, to end this **I would like to thank all my regular readers for your interest and for supporting the site over the years.** Thank you also for your contributions – be it with stories of rides, stories about your bike, or comments in our Feedback section. Remember all of this will be available on Facebook. You can comment, of course, but you can also send in stories of rides etc. The story-type items will be put on the website, with a link appearing on the Facebook page.

So, if you haven't already, head on over to Facebook and find us there. And **let the journey continue!!**